“Would you like to be a clone of your parents, and would you want your children to be clones of you?”

Bath Abbey
27th June 2008

Supporting documentation for this discussion can be downloaded from
Website: www.21learn.org; Email: mail@21learn.org; Telephone: +44 (0) 1225 333376
“Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time”.

Ancient Hebrew Proverb
“It is a poor teacher whose pupils remain dependent upon him”

Nietzsche (1844-1900)
Subsidiarity:
it is wrong for a superior to retain the right of making a decision that an inferior is able to take for itself
The speed of man’s technological discoveries is out-pacing our wisdom and ability to control what we have discovered… what happens here on earth, in this century, could conceivably make the difference between a near eternity filled with ever more complex and subtle forms of life, and one filled with nothing but base matter.

Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal
1st January 2000
“The future sanity of the world depends on the coming together of two great disciplines that haven’t spoken for more than a hundred years – biology and theology”.

The State of the World Forum
San Francisco, 1999
The Origin of Species (1859)

Charles Darwin and Gregor Mendel

(The How’s and Why’s of Life)
Traditionally, Education has often been likened to a three-legged stool, which will always adjust to the most uneven surface (unlike a four-legged chair)

The Home (Emotions)
The Community (Inspiration)
The School (Intellectual)

Progressively as the role of the home and the community has declined, so the role of the school has expanded to fill the vacuum.
The all-round person

“The intellectual training by itself is no more than part of the necessary preparation for maturity. In concentrating on academic performance we lose sight of our main business of educating human personality”.

T.E.S. September 1959

“The present curriculum is at fault because it lacks any moral purpose; it should consider how best to use subjects for the purpose of education… rather than regarding education as the by-product of the efficient teaching of subjects”

Sir Philip Morris, 1952
“The work of the Department of Education and Employment fits with the new economic imperative of supply-side investment for public prosperity”.

David Blunkett, Minister of Education, 2001
Roger Ascham, and *The Scholemaster* published in 1570, the first book ever written in English on the theory of education. Ascham urged the cultivation of what he called “hard wits” rather that the superficial “quick wits” of those youngsters whose memories were good but who couldn’t work things out for themselves. *Because I know that those which be commonly the wisest, the best learned, and best men also, when they be old, were never commonly the quickest of wits when they were young.* Secondly, he urged teachers to be more gentle with their students and warned them against what he called “the butchery of Latin” – go easy on the birch, he said, for children who only learn because they are frightened gain nothing. His third precept was most surprising; *in the attainment of wisdom learning from a book or from a teacher is twenty times as effective as learning from experience.*
I was once in Italy myself, but I thank God that my abode there was but nine days. I saw in that little time, in that one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard in our noble City of London in nine years. So Ascham concluded piously as he defined what he saw as the indisputable role of the school of the future – school teachers should censor what it is that their students study.
“Following in the footsteps of nature we find that the process of learning will be easy if it begins before the mind is corrupted; if it proceeds from the general to the particular, from what is easy to what is more difficult; if the pupil is not over-burdened by too many subjects, and if the intellect be forced to nothing to which its natural bent does not incline it”.

*The Great Didactic*

Jan Amos Comenius, 1638
“I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices both public and private, of peace and war”.

_Of Education_
John Milton, 1644
### “How the well-being of British children compares”

Unicef used six categories to judge young people in 21 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of child well-being</th>
<th>Average ranking position (all dimensions)</th>
<th>Dimension 1 Poverty and inequality</th>
<th>Dimension 2 Health and safety</th>
<th>Dimension 3 Education</th>
<th>Dimension 4 Family and friendships</th>
<th>Dimension 5 Sex, drink, drugs</th>
<th>Dimension 6 Happiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Adolescence”
“I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. When I was young, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly [disrespectful] and impatient of restraint.”
They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When (his parents) saw him, they were astonished and his mother said, “Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.” And he said unto them, “How is it that you sought me? Wist thee not that I must be in my father’s house?” And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them.

St. Luke II, VV 46-49
I would there were no age between ten and three and twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting.

The Winter’s Tale
Act 3, Scene 3
Wm. Shakespeare, 1615
“But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind,
They sent him up to fair London town
An apprentice for to bind.”

Early English ballad C14th
Apprenticeship
It was a system of education and job training by which important practical information was passed from one generation to the next; it was a mechanism by which youths could model themselves on socially approved adults; it was an institution devised to provide proper moral development through the master’s fatherly responsibility for the behaviour of his apprentice; and it was a means of social control imposed upon potentially disruptive male adolescents.

W.J. Rorabough 1986
Seventeenth century English didn’t try to intellectualise adolescence, they simply put the youngsters to work. It was adolescent muscle that did so much of the back-breaking work on the farm, or in the workshop. By the Statute of Artificers in 1563 every adolescent had either to undertake a 7-year craft apprenticeship, or be indentured as a labourer to a farmer. There was simply no room in those days for youngsters who couldn’t do something properly.
The early seventeenth century in England saw develop the finest balance between the evolution of the internal mechanisms of the brain – to survive in this equation people had to use on a daily basis the multiple forms of intelligence that we know from evolution resides within each of us – and a manageable, but always changing, environment to be found anywhere in the world. It was this practical creativity that was the greatest asset England ever possessed, but in the 18th century the English became so busy getting rich that their attitude towards formal education became strictly utilitarian.
Adam Smith argued cogently in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) for the financial benefits to be gained from industrial processes, but he was fearful that, should this happen, then the earlier “alert intelligence of the craftsman” would be replaced by factory operatives who would be “generally as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become.”
The Industrial Revolution changed every aspect of the working practices of the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century. While men of business became phenomenally wealthy, the descendents of countless generations of self-taught farmers, small tradesmen and craftsmen, who had made all that innovation actually happen, saw the craft traditions they had inherited disappear. Robust individualism was replaced by an unthoughtful, demotivated and unskilled mob of people ready only for the life of the factory that had been created.
Dangerous False Assumptions

G.S. Hall, the first president of the American Psychological Society said of Adolescence in 1904, “Never has youth been exposed to such dangers of perversion and arrest as in our own land today. Urban life with its temptations, prematurities, sedentary occupations and passive stimuli just when an active, objective life is most needed, early emancipation and a lessening sense of both duty and discipline…”, led to him energetically advocating for a movement to keep the young from growing up too rapidly by putting them into school for longer. He saw adolescence as a threat not an opportunity.
The Birth of the British Contemporary Secondary School

Despite the long tradition of the classical grammar school, and Britain’s economic pre-eminence due to the Industrial Revolution, a smaller proportion of teenagers attended school in the first part of the 20th century here than in almost any other western country.

… 1938: only 18% of English 14-year-olds attended school

… 1944: a selective tripartite system of secondary schooling was established, and the school leaving age raised to 15
An American commentator writing in 1999 concluded “the principle reason that high schools now enroll nearly all teenagers is that we can’t imagine what else to do with them”. Modern society, being so concerned for the well-being of adults tries desperately to ignore the adolescent’s need to explore and do things for themselves, by giving them ever more to do in school. There are simply not enough opportunities for teenagers to learn from doing things for themselves in a modern society.
Crazy by Design

Neuroscientists have started to suspect that there is something going on in the brain of the adolescent, apparently involuntarily, that is forcing apart the child/parent relationship. This challenges the conventional belief (G.S. Hall) that adolescence is an aberration. Instead, recent research is showing that this is a period of profound structural change that rivals early childhood as a period of critical development. “The teenage brain, far from being ready-made, undergoes a period of surprisingly complex and crucial redevelopment.”
The adolescent brain, being “crazy by design,” could be a critical evolutionary adaptation that has built up over countless generations, and has become essential to our species’ survival. It is adolescence that drives human development by forcing young people in every generation to think beyond their own self-imposed limitations and exceed their parents’ aspirations. These neurological changes in the young brain, as it transforms itself, means that adolescents have evolved to be apprentice-like learners, not pupils sitting at desks awaiting instruction.
“Our society makes adolescence unduly difficult, not because it is too soft on teenagers, but because it is too hard on them. Youngsters of today are growing up in a world in which the values of mutuality and reciprocity that were once an important part of middle-class culture, have been overwhelmed by a shoulder-shrugging individualism that excuses most adults from what we used to think were our personal responsibilities to nurture and support the adolescent.
Postscript

“The biggest crisis we are facing is a crisis of meaning. The tremendous social changes of the last hundred years have stripped modern society of that which gives us meaning, be it to our roots or to our ancestors, to religion, spirituality or our relationship to nature. Within this crisis of meaning young people no longer have those anchors necessary to develop perseverance and learning for its own sake. Instead our daily lives are filled with the pursuit of money and temporary ecstasy. Both of these goals are unfulfillable and result in a misguided frenzy in the pursuit of the next thrill, or in depression.”

Dr. Orlando Jubis
Psychologist and Councillor at the Jakarta International School
11th November 2000
Ethics and Stories

Humans share their imaginations and bond with one another through the stories they tell. A story is to human growth as a fact is to science, mathematics is to physics, or poetry is to the human spirit. Myths are a special kind of story. They capture and express realities that cannot be put directly into words and shared in any other way.

Stories are the platform on which a nation floats.

Whatever the source of ethics, we humans are by our nature ethics-seeking creatures; language, stories, and myths are the tools we use to identify and articulate the ethics we find.

Margaret Somerville

The Ethical Imagination; Journeys of the Human Spirit; 2006
Supporting documentation for this discussion can be downloaded from the Initiative’s

Website: www.21learn.org
Email: mail@21learn.org
Telephone: 01225 333376
Fax: 01225 339133